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VENDING PERMITS FOOD SERVICE TO GROW WITH COLLEGE.

BY- RUSHING, JOE B.

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DESCRIPTORS- *JUNIOR COLLEGES, *FOOD SERVICE, *VENDING MACHINES, *STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES, DINING FACILITIES,

WHEN FUNDS WERE NOT AVAILABLE FOR BUILDING A CAFETERIA AT THE JUNIOR COLLEGE OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA, USE OF VENDING MACHINES PROVED TO BE AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF PROVIDING FOOD SERVICE TO THE STUDENTS OF THE GROWING COLLEGE. SANDWICH SERVICE HAD ALREADY BEEN FOUND UNSATISFACTORY, AND LACK OF KITCHEN FACILITIES PRECLUDED PREPARATION OF FOOD ON THE CAMPUS. LACK OF CAPITAL FUNDS AND TRAINED PERSONNEL NECESSITATED CONTRACTING WITH A VENDING SERVICE. A COLLEGE WISHING TO USE SUCH A PLAN SHOULD CONSIDER FIVE QUESTIONS--(1) IS THE VENDOR RELIABLE. (2) CAN THE VENDOR PROVIDE A FULL LINE OF SERVICE. (3) HOW WILL THE MACHINES BE SERVICED. (4) IS PROPER CHANGE READILY AVAILABLE. (5) IS THE CONTRACT PROPERLY DRAWN. VENDING MACHINES HAVE A PLACE IN A COLLEGE FOOD SERVICE, BUT THEY SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED THE FINAL OR COMPLETE ANSWER TO FOOD SERVICE NEEDS. THIS ARTICLE IS PUBLISHED IN "COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY BUSINESS," VOLUME 37, NUMBER 5, NOVEMBER 1964. (WO)

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A rapidly growing junior college needs low-cost food service facilities to serve now and in the future

Vending Permits Food Service To Grow

Joe B. Rushing
President, Junior College of Broward County
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

WHEN funds were not available to include a cafeteria in the initial phase of buildings, the Junior College of Broward County, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., turned to automatic food vending machines to help solve the problem.

In planning for food service on its new campus, the college had to consider several factors:

1. The limited construction funds would not permit a cafeteria in the first phase. The Junior College of Broward County is growing at a tremendous rate, and state funds for buildings cannot keep up with this rapid growth. All money available in 1962 had to be put into instructional space.

2. The administration accepted the fact that it would be necessary to provide some type of food service. All students commute to classes. Many attend part time, but throughout the day some type of food service had to be available.

3. The traditional school cafeteria is of doubtful value to a junior college that has a commuting student body. The percentage of students purchasing regular meals in such an institution is low. College officials needed time to study the problem and arrive at a solution that was better than anything they had at the time construction was started.

Having agreed that some type of food service must be made available, the college staff began a period of intensive planning. As data were gathered and unforeseen circumstances arose, these plans had to be modified from time to time.

The first problem was to decide what type of food service could best be offered.

A sandwich service catered by some school cafeteria in the system was a possibility. The college had used this during its first year of operation (1960-61) and had found the arrangement less than satisfactory.

Since no kitchen facilities could be constructed, whatever service there was to be offered must use preprepared foods. It was at this point that the decision was made to go to automatic equipment. Vending machines for soft drinks and candy had been used during the first three years. Further investment in this type of operation could be carried over in future years even though a cafeteria or kitchen might be constructed.

The location of a food service presented a problem.

The board of public instruction owned a small frame building which the college requested to house the vending machines. Plans were made to move this building and locate it on the new campus, but before that could be done, it was destroyed by fire. This left no choice but to find an alternate site.

In the first phase of construction, one section of the student center was being built. This is a small building containing some 6,000 square feet and will ultimately serve as the college store. It was planned that during the first three years it would serve as a student lounge with small offices for student publications and student government. With no other space available for a food service, it was decided to erect a temporary partition in the large lounge area seating 75 students, and 80 people may be seated at tables on the food service side.

After arranging for a location, a big question remained: Should the college buy the equipment or contract for the service?

The institution did not have a large amount of money to invest; it had no personnel trained in the operation of food vending machines, and it had no facilities for the preparation of food. Faced with all of these facts, officials decided to contract with a vendor to provide food service.

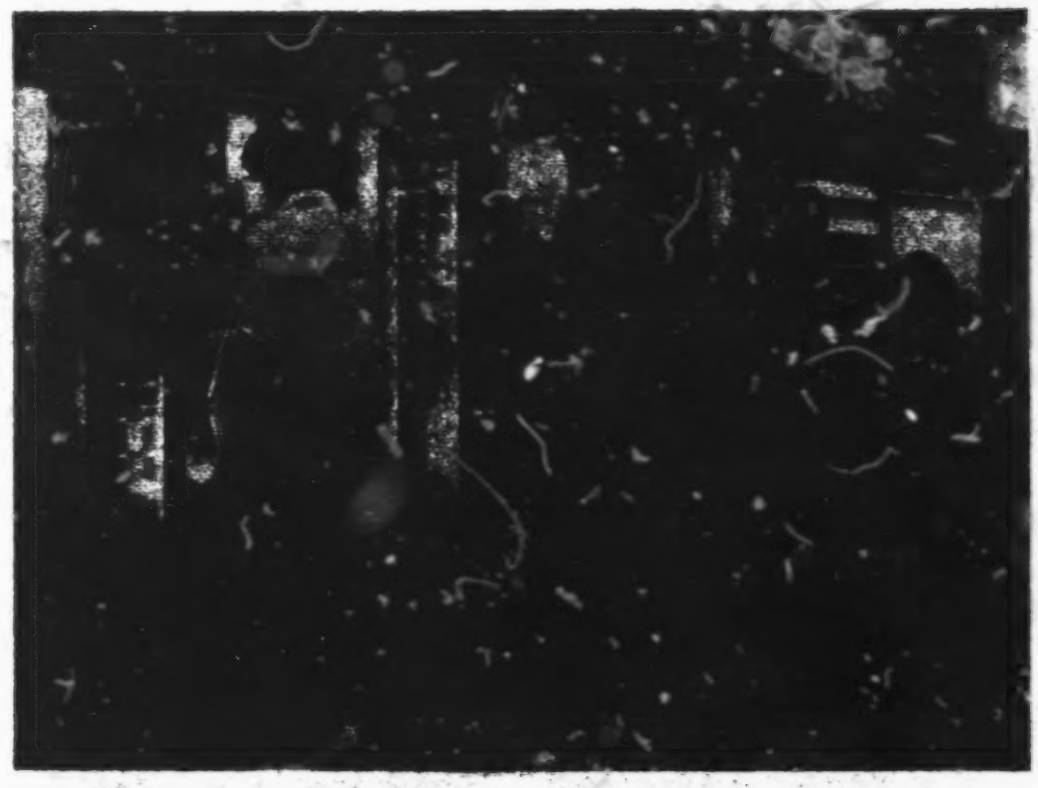
After making these decisions, the staff still had much to do. It visited installations where automated food service was in use, talked with many people who had experience in the field, and sought much information available in the area.

As we look back upon our few months of experience, we feel that we have learned some lessons in food service.

Some important factors should be considered by any institution going into an automated food service of any kind.

Is your vendor a reliable one? There are many people in the vending business. The field is becoming highly competitive. Some are reputable firms with national reputations. Others are local firms able to give excellent service. We must recognize that there are also some vendors who do not understand the problems of institutional feeding or who do not have the personnel, equipment or financial

An adequate number of vending machines is necessary for an efficient operation. At the Junior College of Broward County 15 machines handle peak loads, provide more variety of food, and give continuous service during servicing.



With College

resources to handle a large operation. In our case, we visited installations operated by the bidders, examined their equipment, talked with their suppliers, and checked on their financial security. When time came to select the best bid, there were no questions in our minds about the capability or the reliability of the vendors.

Can the vendor provide a full line of service? This is a decision that must be made. Does the institution want to contract with one vendor to provide all types of food and beverages, or will contracts be given to different vendors? Our decision was to contract with one vendor. Naturally, this eliminates some bidders, but makes it possible to work with only one agency. Where machines are centrally located, it eliminates possible friction if one vendor controls the whole operation. There are a number of reputable firms which can provide a full line of service if the organization is large enough to justify an installation.

How will the machines be serviced? In writing our specifications for bids, college officials specified that the vendor was to provide a full-time employe to service the equipment. (Originally the specifications called for 10 vending machines and one full-time person. After the first few days, the vendor at his own discretion put in five additional machines to provide greater variety of food and more dependable service.)

With a trained person in charge at all times, many of the problems often associated with vending machines were alleviated. The necessity of having such a reliable person on duty cannot be overemphasized. New machines often have not been tested over a long period of time. There is always the possibility of malfunction. Furthermore, students unaccustomed to using machines for so many services tend to push buttons prematurely or do not follow printed instructions closely the first few days.

By having an employe on duty at all times, malfunctions can be corrected immediately and refunds made, if these are in order. Furthermore, a man on duty, if he is alert to students' interests, can learn a great deal about their likes and dislikes about the service. We have made a number of adjustments based on student opinion.

Is proper change readily available? At the Junior College of Broward County students drop $400 a day in vending machines. This money must all be in nickels, dimes and quarters. Although the machines themselves give change, this is not the complete answer. In an installation of this size, we find that both a half-dollar changer and a dollar bill changer are essential. With the development of the efficient bill changer, the problem of change almost has been eliminated.

Is your contract properly drawn? We cannot overemphasize the necessity for giving a great deal of thought and study to the terms of the contract. There are many details which, if clarified and placed in the contract, will prevent many problems later on. Service, performance bonds, sales tax payments — all of these can be worked out well in advance and clearly understood by both the institution and the vendor. Any college considering an automated or other kind of contracted food service would do well to study the contracts of other institutions that have had experience along these lines. The college attorney should be called upon to make certain that the provisions of the contract are consistent with state laws and local regulations.

Our automated food service is not perfect but it is adequate.

It is serving a need at the present time and, with its wide variety of sandwiches, hot foods, salads and other types of food, is doing a creditable job. The college will make some changes in the future. Complaints by a few students are the normal ones which are heard on any college campus or about any type of food service. Others have been legitimate complaints unique to an automated system. The causes of most of these have been corrected.

New facilities to be constructed starting in December will include better provisions for food service. Doubtlessly, the future holds a fountain and a snack bar with limited kitchen facilities. For most of our food service, however, machines will still be employed. We will provide more machines giving a better variety of food and in a better location. Planning the facilities for future food service definitely includes vending.

Machines are not the final answer in any phase of a college program. At the Junior College of Broward County, however, they are an accepted fact and are here to stay. ■

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Do 'Cycles Create More Problems Than They Solve?

Question. The problem of parking for students has been a matter of concern to many college and university administrators. With an increasing number of students using bicycles and motorcycles, do you have any information relative to the policy or operation of such a parking situation on a campus? — H.W.H., Ill.

ANSWER No. 1: Each year after the first two or three weeks of the semester we make a survey of automobile, bicycle and scooter parking facilities in use. We will be making such a survey in a few weeks, but I think we can illustrate the point by referring to the survey made March 11, 1964.

While there is a fee, basically $6 a month, for the parking of all automobiles on campus, there is no fee for bicycles, scooters and motorcycles. We set up regulations for the registration of scooters and various attempts have been made by the city to get bicycle riders to register their units largely for the purpose of recovery in the case of theft. We have been unsuccessful in getting either bicycles or scooters registered. Accordingly, we usually accumulate a few odds and ends of bicycles which have been abandoned during the summer.

We provide separate spaces for bicycles and scooters and have them posted. Bicycles are allowed to move into the central campus close to buildings, while scooters are kept out of the central campus because of the noise. Spaces are provided at each residence hall and a great many students ride their bikes or scooters up to a mile in order to avoid a straight line quarter mile walk.

As we have developed parking structures, we have indicated scooter parking in the various corners and these protected spaces because it decreases vandalism. We are constantly marking off new areas and 3 by 9 stalls for scooters so that the count referred to here is continually changing. For what it is worth, last March 11 on the main campus we had 897 spaces for bicycles and found 377 in use. We had 698 spaces for scooters and found 559 in use. In addition, we had 448 bicycle spaces near residence halls and, since the count was made at midday, there were only 140 in use. Likewise, there were 89 scooter stalls with 31 in use.

We use a "hang on" card to warn scooter parkers that they are not legally parked. There is no method of enforcement other than by persuasion. — L. H. SWEENEY, *principal superintendent, department of physical plant, University of California, Los Angeles.*

ANSWER No. 2: Our campus has faced this situation with varying degrees of acuteness for decades. Lately it has assumed substantial proportions.

Last year 584 motorized cycles were registered on the Ann Arbor campus and the number appears to increase at the rate of 100 per year. It may interest you to know that a few of these are operated by women students.

Last year the number of registered bicycles operated by students on the Ann Arbor campus amounted to 6600. We estimate that an additional 500 or so unregistered bicycles are in use also.

These motorized cycles and bicycles amplified by more than 5000 student registered automobiles constitute a formidable implementation of student circulation on a campus that is substantially and intimately interdependent with the rapidly growing city of Ann Arbor. Regulations mitigate the problem but do not solve it. It is our belief that an increasingly realistic and professional approach is the only answer to this mingling of a metropolitan community and equally urban multiversity. — PETER A. OSTAFIN, *assistant to the vice-president*

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